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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN: 0648-XA924

Fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Public Meetings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of SEDAR Data/Assessment Workshop for Highly Migratory Species (HMS) blacktip sharks.

SUMMARY: The SEDAR assessment of the HMS stocks of Gulf of Mexico blacktip sharks will consist of one workshop and a series of webinars.

DATES: The SEDAR Workshop will take place March 19-23, 2012. See SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: The Workshop will be held at Wyndham Bay Point Resort, 4114 Jan Cooley Drive, Panama City Beach, FL 32408, United States; telephone: (850) 236-6000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Neer, SEDAR Coordinator, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; telephone: (843) 571-4366; e-mail: Julie.neer@safmc.net

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions have implemented the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process, a multi-step method for determining the status of fish stocks in the Southeast Region. SEDAR is a multi-step process including: (1) Data/Assessment Workshop, and (2) a series of webinars. The product of the Data/Assessment Workshop is a report which compiles and evaluates potential datasets and recommends which datasets are appropriate for assessment analyses, and describes the fisheries, evaluates the status of the stock, estimates biological benchmarks, projects future population conditions, and recommends research and monitoring needs. Participants for SEDAR Workshops are appointed by the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, HMS Management Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Participants include data collectors and database managers; stock assessment scientists, biologists, and researchers; constituency representatives including fishermen, environmentalists, and NGO's; International experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

SEDAR 29 Data/Assessment Workshop Schedule:

March 19, 2012: 1 p.m. - 8 p.m.; March 20-22, 2012: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.; March 23, 2012: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

An assessment data set and associated documentation will be developed during the Workshop. Participants will evaluate proposed data and select appropriate sources for providing information on life history characteristics, catch statistics, discard estimates, length and age composition, and fishery dependent and fishery independent measures of stock abundance.

Using datasets selected, participants will develop population models to evaluate stock status, estimate population benchmarks and management criteria, and project future conditions.

Participants will recommend the most appropriate methods and configurations for determining stock status and estimating population parameters. Participants will prepare a workshop report, documenting the data incorporated and all decisions made during the process, and complete results of the assessment.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings.

Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see ADDRESSES) at least 10 business days prior to each workshop.

Dated: February 21, 2012.

Tracey L. Thompson,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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